

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORIY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 055731

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TU, IR, US, LV, EFIN, PEPR

SUBJECT: TURKISH/IRANIAN RELATIONS

1. ON MARCH 1 IRANIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR ARDALAN VISITED
DEPARTMENT COUNSELOR NIMETZ FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION THAT
ULTIMATELY FOCUSED ON IRAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY.

2. ARDALAN ASKED NIMETZ FOR SUMMARY OF COUNSELOR'S RECENT
TRIP TO TURKEY. NIMETZ COMMENDED ECEVIT GOVERNMENT FOR
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GOOD START ON CYPRUS, GREEK, AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. ECEVIT
GOVERNMENT IS PRESENTLY EDUCATING ITSELF AND FINDING THAT
THE ECONOMY IS WORSE THAN THEY IMAGINED AND THAT INTER-
NATIONAL PERCEPTION OF TURKEY, FLOWING FROM CYPRUS AND
GREEK RELATED PROBLEMS, GREATLY COMPLICATED SOLUTION OF
ECONOMIC AND SECURITY PROBLEMS. BULK OF DISCUSSION IN
ANKARA DEALT WITH TURKISH DESIRE FOR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

SO THAT DEMOCRATIC/SOCIAL FABRIC COULD WITHSTAND TEST OF
NEEDED AUSTERITY MEASURES.

3. U.S. EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR TURKEY'S PLIGHT AND DESIRE
TO HELP TURKEY RESOLVE ITS PROBLEMS WHILE MAINTAINING
WESTERN ORIENTATION. AT SAME TIME, IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY
TO URGE TURKEY TO FIRST WORK OUT AGREEMENT WITH IMF AND
MAJOR FOREIGN CREDITORS. NIMETZ MENTIONED THAT HIS VISIT

TO ANKARA COINCIDED WITH THAT OF LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER
JALLOU. ECEVIT APPEALED FOR LIBYAN ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND
WHATEVER LIBYAN RESPONSE MIGHT HAVE BEEN, ECEVIT HAD
SEEMED SOMEWHAT BUOYED BY JALLOU VISIT.

4. IRANIAN COUNSELOR COMMENTED ECEVIT IS GENERALLY
TEMPTED TO FLIRT WITH NEUTRALS AND HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT
ATTRACTED TO LIBYA'S LEADER QADHAFI. HE ALSO NOTED A
GROWING PREDILECTION OF MANY IN TURKEY TOWARDS SEEKING
AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

5. GIVEN THE SITUATION DESCRIBED ABOVE, NIMETZ SUGGESTED
IT MIGHT BE IN THE INTEREST OF IRAN AND OTHERS WHO DESIRE
A STABLE WESTERN-ORIENTED TURKEY TO FIND OCCASION TO
EXPRESS THEIR SYMPATHETIC CONCERN TO TURKISH OFFICIALS.

6. ARDALAN RESPONDED THAT SINCE WORLD WAR II, IRAN
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OFFICIALLY MAINTAINED CLOSE AND GOOD RELATIONS WITH CENTO
ALLY, TURKEY. IN FACT, TURKISH ISOLATION AND INWARD
LOOKING SENSE OF NATIONALISM AND PRIDE, PLUS HISTORY OF
OTTOMAN AND PERSIAN COMPETITION, CREATED RATHER DISTANT
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO NEIGHBORS.

7. ARDALAN SEVERAL TIMES TURNED DISCUSSION TO ISSUES OF
"KEY CONCERN TO IRAN." HE DESCRIBED THESE AS THE HORN OF
AFRICA AND PRESENT IMPASSE IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT
AND ISRAEL. HE SPECULATED THAT CONTINUING DETERIORATION
OF WESTERN POSITION ON HORN WOULD ULTIMATELY EFFECT SAUDI
PERCEPTION OF WEST, LEADING TO RE-EVALUATION WITH SEVERE
LONG RUN DAMAGE TO WEST'S ECONOMIC POSITION. HE ALSO
FEARED FAILURE SADAT INITIATIVE MUST LEAD TO RADICALIZATION
OF GULF AND MID EAST WITH CONSEQUENT DANGERS FOR IRAN AND
U.S.

8. AT THIS POINT, NIMETZ STRESSED THAT FOR MOST OF POST-
WAR PERIOD TURKEY HAS BEEN THE ONE QUIET, STABLE AND PRO-
WESTERN NEIGHBOR FOR IRAN. BOTH AGREED THAT IT WAS
IMPORTANT THAT THIS REMAIN THE CASE.

9. COMMENT: WHILE IN ANKARA, NIMETZ HAD INFORMALLY ASKED SENIOR GOT OFFICIALS WHETHER, GIVEN EXTENT OF TURKEY'S PROBLEMS, THEY HAD CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF SEEKING ADVICE AND COOPERATION FROM POTENTIALLY FRIENDLY REGIONAL POWERS SUCH AS IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE ADDRESSEES' COMMENT ON POSSIBILITIES IN THIS REGARD. CHRISTOPHER

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